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Federal Communications Commission  
20042 Coltsfoot Terrace, #304 Office of the Secretary  
Ashburn, VA 22011

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MMB ENFORCEMENT  
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Office of the Secretary  
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Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in response to an article I read in Video Magazine. They suggested that you are willing to listen to the comments of Video enthusiasts such as myself on the future of Video, Audio, and Data delivery systems.

Let me tell you a bit about myself. I am a 30 year old, single, adult male. I am employed by a major aerospace company as Scientific Computer Programmer.

In home Video, Audio and Computer Entertainment are major hobbies of mine. I have owned a 26 inch Monitor/Television and a Dolby Surround Sound System for some time now. I recently upgraded to a Dolby Prologic system. I also have owned a state of the art digital Laserdisc/CD player for a few years. I have a modest collection of CD's and Laserdiscs. At least half of my Laserdiscs are in Letterbox format (that would be all of them if every movie was available in that format at a reasonable price). I own a Hi/Fi stereo VCR. The television is stereo also.

With all this equipment, the only thing that gives me displeasure is the cable system that delivers the majority of the video source material that I listen to. I remember when cable was first introduced. It was a high quality alternative to through-the-air television broadcasts in the small town where I lived. Compared to the quality of air broadcasts, cable was crystal clear. A real competitive alternative to buying an antenna for your roof.

But somewhere along the way, something happened to cable. The picture quality went down hill, there were frequent service interruptions, there was that annoying buzz in the audio, and the prices went up. And here it is many years from the inception of cable, and there are no competitors; no incentive for cable to try and win customers loyalty. One would think that in a major metropolis ( I live in Northern Virginia only 30 miles west of DC) there would be better service.

In the beginning, we paid for the delivery system cable provided and it only carried the network channels and a movie channel. Now as cable companies raise their rates, they site the dramatic increase in programming material that cable has brought us as the reason for doing so. The thing that I don't understand is why I am paying for programming material and still watching commercials. For years the Networks have provided us with free programming based on the fact that we tolerate watching numerous ads. The capital needed to run the Networks came from ad revenues. I am watching commercials on cable channels, hence the cable channels are receiving ad revenue, and on top of that I am paying for the so called increase in vari-

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ety of programming material from cable. How fair is that? The cable channels should also be providing free programming material just like the networks.

Cable needs competition. The phone companies are positioned to give competition. They have spent just as much if not more wiring America for phone service as the cable companies have spent wiring America for cable. I am very glad that you have given the go ahead for the phone companies to provide new services including Video delivery. If cable has to fight to win customer loyalty then our service can only improve. Satellite broadcasters should also be given an open door. Sky cable is another wonderful idea.

HDTV is the greatest thing I've heard of besides the wealth of services that can be delivered by Cable, Phone, and Satellite. But American companies need to get on the ball quickly. Foreign companies are already getting their foot in the door by producing upgradable widescreen TV sets. When we finally decide on the standards they will be in a position to upgrade those sets directly to our chosen standard.

An interim standard needs to be released immediately so that American companies can build and sell widescreen sets. These early sets should be affordable, should work the digital magic to provide non-interlaced displays, should expand letterbox formatted movies to full screen size, normal square source material should be displayed with a filler on the sides or the ability to fill in the unused space with PIPs, and the tubes should be capable of displaying a variety of resolutions. In the future when a standard has been decided, upgraded modules should be produced which can be installed in minutes, in home, by dealers or sophisticated consumers. The TV should become the centerpiece of in-home communications. Mail could be delivered with lightning speed, full motion video telephone service, fax service, all controlled by simple remotes with on screen programming and control such as the new Frox system.

You shouldn't have to buy extremely expensive components to be part of this system, either. Ford made the automobile the number one form of transportation by selling it extremely cheaply. Now that almost everyone owns one, it is a major driving force in our economy. The introduction of these new Audio/Video systems should be the same. It should be affordable by everyone! CD players are down to under \$200 and just about everyone owns one. Cellular phones are down so cheap that they are starting to appear everywhere. Let the same happen with HDTV and the new services.

We connected America with railroads, with power, with phone service, and with cable. Now it is time to connect the minds of America as never before with Video, Audio and Data services on a quality fiber optic computer network. Bring us into the future Ladies and Gentlemen of the FCC. Don't let the naysayers hold you back. And let it happen fast! Before the rest of the world passes us by and tramples all over our economy selling us the technology that they will undoubtedly bring to market.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Franko